Hearts were broken at the Humane Society of Ventura County when our staff learned of the passing of a very special friend, Chuck Bowman, on Dec. 15, 2020. Most people would recognize Chuck as a hardworking carrier for the USPS in Oak View. But the staff, volunteers, and supporters of the HSVC knew Chuck as our beloved “Santa.” He was featured in our newsletters for the past 12 years. Chuck had such a kind soul and bonded instantly with any type of animal we put in his arms for the annual photo shoots. From dogs and cats to chickens and horses, Chuck was a friend to all living creatures. Since 2008 Chuck posed for thousands of photos, twice a year, never once complaining, even when the animals or the humans got anxious holding still. We celebrate and honor Chuck’s presence by showcasing some of the images taken over the years at our Santa Paws Holiday Event, including one taken with his late wife, Debbie. From everyone at the HSVC, our thoughts go out to Chuck’s family. We love you Santa!

- Jolene Hoffman, Shelter Director
A very special day is coming! “My BIRD-DAY!” I am turning 34-years-old on March 25th. I was born in 1987. I have lived with my loving Humane Society family since 1992. I am truly one lucky Mr. Oliver Bird! Spring has sprung and kitten season is here once again. Please don’t falter to alter! Please remember spay and neuter. Since the shelter has been closed to public walk throughs, I have been working on my dance moves. My friends have the best music to get my groove on. Stay safe, social distance, and remember to cover your beaks!

Meet Prowler, a sweet German Shepherd with a heartbreaking story. Seven-year-old Prowler grew up in a very loving home. His owner, a first responder and single mother of four children, faced many challenges brought on by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Unable to give him the care he required, Prowler’s owner took him to live with her mother in Santa Paula in July of 2020. He lived there happily until January of 2021, when her mother lost her home during a high wind storm. Realizing she no longer had a place for herself to live, let alone a dog, her mother was forced to surrender Prowler to the HSVC while she searched for a new home.

Despite the change of scenery, Prowler remains a happy-go-lucky dog. The sweet pup loves to play fetch with our staff and splash around in the water. He gets along with people and animals because he was raised in a home with children, cats, and small dogs. Prowler has had some obedience training and responds well to a confident owner. Like many German Shepherds, he is very strong and will need an experienced handler to take him on long walks. Prowler does have some medical needs that will need tending to as he gets older.

Say Hello to Prowler!
As we try to forget the negatives of 2020, we move forward into the New Year with hope that things will be better. People and businesses have struggled to cope with the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 Pandemic. In addition to adjusting to a new normal, we also have a host of new state laws to adhere to. One of such laws is Food and Agriculture 31752.1 and 31108.3 Cats and Dogs Microchipping.

A microchip is a small identification device injected under the skin of a dog or cat. Each microchip has a unique ID number registered with the pet and owner’s information, making it a permanent way to identify that animal if it were to get lost. According to the new law, any public animal control agency, shelter, or rescue group may not release a dog or cat to an owner seeking to reclaim or adopt that animal unless it is or will be microchipped.

The Humane Society of Ventura County offers microchipping services at our Shelter in Ojai for $15, including registration with BeKind PetFind.

However, under this law, if the agency, shelter, or group does not have such capabilities on location, they must make a good faith effort to locate available, free, or discounted microchipping services and provide that information to the owner. The owner must then sign an agreement stating they will bring the agency, shelter, or group proof that their pet has been microchipped within 30 days.

Under this law, a dog or cat can be exempt from these requirements if that animal is medically unfit for a microchipping procedure. The animal may also be exempt if their owner signs a form stating that the cost of microchipping would impose an economic hardship. As of January 1, 2021, any agency, shelter, or group violating this law is subject to a civil penalty of $100. Call the Shelter at 805-646-6505 to book your microchipping appointment. We are located at 402 Bryant St. in Ojai, CA, 90323.

- Jeff Hoffman, Director of Investigations
Senior Humane Officer Tracy Vail has decided to leave the Humane Society of Ventura County to focus on her dog training business, The Canine Messenger. Tracy, who was hired by the HSVC as a Humane Officer in 2005, performed investigations of animal abuse and neglect, collected evidence, and testified in extreme cases where prosecution was warranted. She also assisted in evacuations during fires and other emergencies and educated the public about the compassionate care of animals.

“She has saved thousands of animals from abusive and neglectful situations over the past 16 years. We are excited to hear she is on her new adventure as a certified dog trainer and behaviorist. We all wish her the best of luck in her new endeavor,” said Jeff Hoffman, Director of Investigations for the HSVC.

For the past few years, Tracy has worked closely with hard-to-place dogs who come into the Shelter. Her work included screening applicants, helping dogs with various behavior issues, and handling meet-and-greets with potential adopters.

“With this transition from Senior Humane Officer to full-time dog trainer and behaviorist, I feel that I will have the greatest impact.” As the Canine Messenger, Tracy works one-on-one with families and their dogs. “I help people develop a better relationship with their dogs through a series of mental stimulation exercises, structured walks, and going over questions they may have about their situation in their home.”

Tracy has nothing but praise for her experiences at the HSVC. “I want to thank everyone in the community and everyone at the Humane Society. I have been fortunate enough to meet some of the best people throughout Ventura County. I found that there’s more good out there than bad,” Tracy said.

Thank you, Tracy, for all you have done for the animals and people of Ventura County! If you feel an animal’s life is in danger, contact your local police immediately, then notify our Officers by phone at (805)656-5031 or 646-6505. All information is confidential.
Community Connections

It’s in adversity that individuals shine. Our entire staff at the Humane Society of Ventura County has done an extraordinary job since our first stay at home orders were issued in March 2020 (seems like a lifetime ago). I would like to shine the spotlight on group of individuals who primarily work in the background; Amy King: Media and Marketing Coordinator, Ralph Saccomano: Grant Associate, Angie Sagliani: Humane Educator, and Audra Lucas: Volunteer Coordinator.

“We are collectively known as Team Outreach, and our job encompasses raising awareness of the HSVC, our Mission, and our services.”

Amy oversees the Paws 4 Thought quarterly newsletter and our social media feeds. She has steadfastly updated the public on our services, often several times a month, reflecting the changing County and State health guidelines. Ralph writes our grant applications and consults with every department at the HSVC to determine priority needs and opportunities. Angie is the Humane Educator and does in-person presentations for Ventura County schools - Pre-K through 12. She has since converted all her presentations to online platforms, including our popular Summer Animal Adventure Camp. Audra was hired during the pandemic to oversee the hundreds of volunteers, who give their time helping us out. Since we have been closed to in-person volunteer work, she has created several contactless engagement opportunities for the public to stay connected to our Shelter.

As their direct supervisor, I can say that this team has thrived these past 12 months and I am proud to be a part of their efforts. Thank you to everybody at the Shelter who have kept our services going despite these challenging times. And thank you to all our community partners, volunteers, and supporters who give us the positive energy to keep it up.

- Greg Cooper, Director of Community Outreach
Special thanks to Nora Davis (right) and her fellow agents at LIV Sotheby’s Realty Ojai office for their large donation of cat food. Their donation, which included a check, was in lieu of their Homes for Pets Project annual event that was canceled due to the pandemic. The event, hosted by LIV Sotheby’s, attracts speakers, vendors, and animals, all to benefit the HSVC. The cat food will help supply our Pantry 4 Paws pet food bank, which services eight remote locations throughout our county.  

The HSVC would like to extend a big thank you to Judi and her granddaughter Maggie (left) for filling up an astounding 41 piggy banks and donating the money back to our Shelter! Our staff counted each penny from the banks, with a grand total of $354.50! Judi and Maggie’s generous donation will directly benefit the animals under our care by providing the funds for food, supplies, and medical care. What a great way to ring in the new year! Thank you Maggie and Judi!

The HSVC is excited to be selected by JW Home Care as a recipient of their 2021 giving campaign. They are donating 3% of total sales from their cleaning and restoration services to several non-profits in Ventura County, including the HSVC! According to Jonathan Wagoner (right), CEO of JW Home Care, each charity was chosen because of their commitment to serve our community. He recently stopped by the Shelter with a truck-full of donated dog food to announce his support of the HSVC.
I don’t know anyone that can say 2021 started off “just like any other year”. The pandemic still rages on in our county, many businesses are still closed or have modified services, and as far as I know, no one is planning any big vacations! But it is hard for me not to look toward the future of this year with some degree of optimism. The vaccine is out and being administered, albeit slower than we all had hoped. The infection rate numbers are slowly creeping down and restrictions are being lifted. We plan to work harder this year to help our community, with a goal of surpassing 2000 spays and neuters by the end of the year! To do so, we will continue to offer our low-cost services to the public and continue to work with local rescue partners and community cat trappers to support the hard work they do. In addition, our HSVC Cares outreach program is working with the Westside Community Development Corporation of Ventura to promote free spays and neuters to those in the Westside (Ventura Ave.) community, along with discounted vaccines and other services. We hope to host off-site HSVC Cares vaccine clinics by the Fall. In the meantime, we will wear our masks, wash our hands, and keep a very positive attitude!

- Dr. Christina Sisk
Director of Veterinary Services
“Greetings, Animal Friends!” This was the greeting broadcasted online to young animal friends and fans (recommended ages 7-12) of HSVC’s virtual enrichment classes. When I say fans, I mean the faces of children that frequently popped up on my Zoom screen to experience the latest presentation given by me, the Humane Educator. This was not your typical virtual or hybrid classroom of a Ventura County school; it was a virtual learning animal experience.

In Fall of 2020, after the success of HSVC’s first virtual summer camp, I continued offering interactive online classes to families with children who were interested in learning more about animals. The children from our summer camp kept showing up to the virtual courses I conducted online. Before I knew it, I had fans! Children I recognized by name. In December of 2020, I created a virtual winter camp to keep children entertained during their school’s winter break. Most classes even had a surprise animal guest! I am grateful to have had animal friends who wanted to learn how to be kinder to animals.

My goal as the Humane Educator is to broaden our outreach efforts to more audiences. Before COVID-19, our organization saw success with in-school presentations. As education changed to virtual platforms, HSVC adapted to meet the needs of our community. When schools go back to live classrooms, we will adapt again to meet our organization’s educational goals.

For more information about our educational and outreach programming, please contact Angie Sagliani at Education@hsvc.org or call me directly at 805-364-1350.

-Angie Sagliani, Humane Educator
Success Story
Vaya Finds Her Home

Vaya came to the HSVC through our rescue partners in early April of 2019 to find a new home. Formerly Sundae, the friendly German Shepherd quickly became a staff favorite. Dave and his family visited our shelter hoping to find a loving dog to make a part of their family. A fateful encounter led them to Vaya, and they have been living happily ever since!

“We came to look for a dog and almost as soon as we walked in, I saw an old friend of mine, Kim Gray, who was volunteering there, in the enclosure with Vaya. She invited us to come in and meet her and we immediately fell in love. She is the most lovable dog ever and loves everyone. It’s amazing how quickly she became a member of our family! We truly cannot imagine life without her now,” said Dave.

According to Dave, the family was a little concerned Vaya would not get along with their cat, Otis, once they brought her home. As it turns out, the furry friends get along great! Vaya enjoys playing with Otis and going on walks with her new family. Thank you, Dave and family, for taking a chance on our girl Vaya!
Pet Gallery

Check out some of our adoptable furry friends!

Twix, 1-year-old, Male Domestic Shorthair

Harley, 23-years-old Female Quarterhorse

Darby, 2-years-old Female Chihuahua

Clover, 10-months-old Female Domestic Mediumhair

Max, 4-years-old Male Anatolian Shepherd

Wendy Nova, 13-years-old Female Quarthorse and Arabian
Established in July 2019, the Pantry 4 Paws remote pet food bank has been a tremendous success in feeding pets of those in need throughout Ventura County. Pantry 4 Paws is an extension of the Humane Society of Ventura County’s Pet Food Bank. It is hosted by eight nonprofit and social services organizations that cater to those in need.

The need for these services has increased tremendously since the start of the pandemic. The HSVC delivered 6418 pounds of dog and cat food in 2020 for the Pantry 4 Paws program. One organization served by this program is the Upper Ojai Relief (UOR) nonprofit, which was founded after the Thomas Fire destroyed over 1000 structures and left countless families out in the cold. UOR has mobilized each time a natural disaster strikes in Ventura County. UOR rallied again during the COVID-19 pandemic and gave out gift cards, food, and other supplies to families in need in the Ojai Valley.

As a community partner, the HSVC was right by their side, giving away pet food for those in need. The HSVC and Upper Ojai Relief are nonprofits funded solely by private donations. They rely entirely on the support and generosity of the community to function. To learn more about the HSVC and Upper Ojai Relief, or to contribute to their efforts, please visit our website at www.hsvc.org or their website at www.upperojairelief.org.
Here’s my/our gift to sponsor an animal for adoption

- Pet Friend - $30

Name(s) ____________________________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________________________
Email ____________________________ Phone _____________________________

We would like to sponsor ____________________________________________
This is a gift for ____________________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________________________

☐ Check OR Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Discover
In the amount of $_________ Card # ____________________________ Exp. ___________
Name on card ______________________________________________________
Signature __________________________________________________________

SMALL & MEDIUM PAVERS - you may use up to two lines

LARGE PAVERS - you may use a third line

Give a gift of love to the animals of the Humane Society with a timeless paver stone in the HSVC Memory Garden. Simply fill out the form below and bring it in or mail it to us with your payment. We will send a card to the recipient acknowledging your gift in their honor. Thank you to everyone who has purchased a paver stone in the past. We appreciate your constant support and look forward to a time where we can welcome you back to the Shelter again. For more information on purchasing a paver, please contact Betty Jo MacCaughtry at BettyJoM@hsvc.org or call us at 805-646-6505.
Thank you all for supporting the Humane Society Ventura County! This year was unlike any other, and we are proud of the way our dedicated staff responded in the midst of a global pandemic. As a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with over 89 years of service to Ventura County, we owe our successes to the support we have received from our community. The HSVC has functioned as an independent organization and is not a chapter of, nor affiliated with, any other organizations either locally or on the national level. Our ability to serve our community is a reflection of the support we receive from our neighbors and friends. Besides our Shelter and Adoption Center, the HSVC has steadily grown with a focus on expanding its spay/neuter program, humane education, and animal rescue efforts. The HSVC prides itself in providing opportunities for those interested in animal welfare issues. Your involvement, whether it be adopting a new family member, volunteering your time, or making an in-kind donation, has a direct and immediate impact on the lives of animals in our county. We thank you for your continued support during these tough times and look forward to when we can welcome you back to the Shelter!